















# INCENSE OF SANDALWOOD







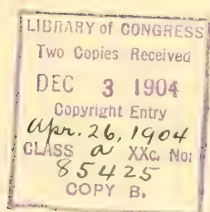
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# INCENSE OF SANDALWOOD

By Willimina L. Armstrong



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BY WILLIMINA L. ARMSTRONG

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The author desires to thank the Editors of the Atlantic Monthly for their courteous permission to reprint "The Great God Ram," which originally appeared in that magazine.





Silence like music falls on my spent soul;

Love's lotus buds float soft on perfumed lakes of fancy till the dawn

Shall quicken them to fullness.

Then shall they rise up fair and sing a song of Ind!

Shedding back richness in the face of morning!

These shall be gathered by my spirit's angel and laid before thy feet

O Queen Ameerah!

Laid near thy feet a token from the Pilgrim

Who bent her head and passed forth from thy Gates

And blessed thee!

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Up and down the highways of these broad United States a multitude of kindly-hearted folk have rendered rich and gracious courtesy to me—who am a Pilgrim.

To them and to their kind I offer somewhat, gathered and brought from far and prepared. If it be pleasing, the pleasantness is due to its substance. If it lack grace, the lack is in its preparation.

For those who are able to read my Cipher and discover perfume in it, I have brought of the Leaves, unbroken: for those who are able to read and discover sweetness also, I have brought of the Bark, unbruised: and for those who read and obtain richness, I have brought a breath out of that silence which was upon my anointing.

If to any there seem only a smoke of burning, think on this, that Love knelt before the altar of Life and rendered an offering and the perfume of the smoke of the sacrifice was Ameera: that spirit in us which is not of us, toward which we stretch when we are most alone from ourselves, against which we lean and strain upward to measure how high we might grow toward God.

What I offer is for a token of kinship in immutable bonds and for a greeting of Peace.



# INCENSE OF SANDALWOOD



# **SANDALWOOD, CINNAMON AND POUTCHA-PAT.**

## **A Cipher.**

I stood in a dream of youth in an Indian forest by the banks of a sacred stream.

A Seer sat patiently under a tree close by.

Many trees of many kinds grew round about.

It seemed an old place and there was a great quiet.

Then came people from other countries banded in groups and moving in divers directions. They did much speaking while they went to and fro.

I noticed that the Seer, in his learning, and I, in my ignorance, seemed to be alone. All the others were banded together in companies.

I was lonely, but being ignorant I held my peace; for some reason he also was silent and they did not disturb him—or me.

I looked upon their ways to gather wisdom unto myself against the future.

They plucked leaves and broke them in pieces and smelled them; some said they discerned perfume and others cried against those and said it was stench.

These were more in number than those.

There was a noise of contention and those were driven back by these till their voices were no more heard.

The quiet air remained troubled after they were gone and the river murmured against them for some time.

Others coming rended bark from the trees and tore it and smelled and tasted. A few said they found goodness, but a great many cast it down and trod on it and bruised it and spoke against it that it was nauseous.

Then arose loud cries claiming and disclaiming and abusing. The first said ‘Behold this goodness is like that good-

ness with which we also are nourished.” But they were few. The others said with loud voices “It is poison.”

Then all the singing birds were silent and the little squirrels ran and hid themselves.

After a long while the companies passed forth from that place yet striving; but I thought those who found goodness in the bark were weary and would not strive much longer. I also was weary; howbeit I had taken no part—being ignorant.

I looked on the Seer and he sat patiently under the tree close by. I thought there came out of him a sort of stillness like the shadow of peace.

The birds began to sing and the squirrels came out from their hiding places and a black-horned gazelle trod nimbly to the water’s edge and drank.

While evening gathered the air grew dawn-like; and I went and sat down not far from the Seer.

The river lifted its tideless current to the moonlight and the bulbul opened its throat and sung a song.

Then night fetched her coolness and spread it over all the growing things and covered them with delicate dampness for refreshment and they began a still hymn at their roots.

The Seer sat patiently under the tree close by.

I wondered a little about what life would do all by itself.

Afterward a richness like every perfume gathered by some alchemist and brewed into a benediction ointment came upon me and behold, the Seer held his hand for a cup against the tree he leaned upon and it gave forth of its deep core small drops of oil.

And he anointed me and I rose up and went my way bearing a knowledge of eternal peace and covenanted to heal and not destroy.











## ANARKALI

In the days of Akbar and his compeers—those great Mogul rulers of Hindustan! in the days of marble tombs and silver fountains! In the days when a beautiful woman could not be found labouring in the fields of the plainlands or among the rocks of the hill-country or grinding grain at the mill-stone under the sun, within a city's wall—because they were all bought from their fathers to fill the halls of princes with music and laughter and perfume and the tinkling of countless jeweled bells that rang on their glancing feet. In the days when only uncomely women were given burdens to carry and grain to grind and loathsome tasks to do—for beauty was better than silver and dearer than gold because there were many princes in the Land and even slave girls must be beautiful in royal palaces. In those days the peoples of the plains rallied

round their chiefs in scarlet cloth and gold on great days and feast days and all days kept in memory of men. And the City of the Punjab nestled softly, by the river, on the plains below the foothills of the high Himalaya hills.

And the Palace of Lahore was a great palace; white, in the golden moonlight, shone the palace; and in the red light of the sun it was so bright that no man's eye could rest on it—for it was built of marble like the living white of a Persian war-horse.

The King was old. The hair that coiled under the jewels on his head, was like the stones of his palace for color; and the beard which lay upon his breast, was like rich cream from the milk of a young buffalo. But his eye was bright and his cheek was ruddy and his ear was so keen that the court musicians feared him. The maidens in his hall were very beautiful; but the most beautiful of them all was Anarkali; and when she came before the King, he saw no beauty in any other; but the beauty of Anarkali was very great in the eyes of the King. She was a slave girl: and the King owned her: the work of her round brown fingers, the sounds of music from her round brown throat, the light of her eyes and the grace of her feet when she danced beside the fountain, were the King's.

And she was commanded and told that if she smiled on any one save the King only—her life was forfeit.

many feet, the evening star looked out through a veil of mist. It was the hour of prayer. In the name of Mohammad, let nothing interfere! Listen! it is still! The task is done! The King's oath has been performed! Go to, send swift messengers to the roof where he waits: let the runners bear tidings and stay not! 'The King and the King's servants may pray!'

But the child prince mourned in his heart, when he heard how, that because of her smile on him the beauty of Anarkali had been crushed in the earth and the voice of Anarkali had been stilled forever; and he went aside into a quiet place and lifted up his child's hand and swore a great oath, also in the name of Mohammad the Prophet, as he was the son of their King and the Prince of the Faithful people of the Land of Five Rivers, as soon as he should sit in his father's seat, in that day when his feet should stand upon his father's throne, he would build a tomb over the body of Anarkali: and fire should be lighted at the four corners of that tomb every evening between sunset and the shining of the first star, so long as men should dwell in the Land of Five Rivers who named the name of Mohammad the Prophet and who prayed the prayers of the Faithful in the evening: and as far as the sound of the voice of Anarkali had been heard round about in every direction, when she cried out in the hour of her death, so far that land should be called by the name of Anarkali.

And when the old King died and the prince reigned in his stead, he built a tomb over the place of Anarkali; and from that day fire has been lighted at the four corners of that tomb, between sunset and the shining of the first star, in the evening of every day, even unto the present day. And the land round about the tomb, as far as a voice can reach in every direction, is called by the name of Anarkali; for as the prince swore it should be it has been and it is so.





**Life, more than all that live, is sacred.**



There be some, like earth in the monsoon time,  
Full of anguish and silent strife  
To burst somehow, but soon, somewhere,  
Up, out to a stranger life.  
So, wrestling long and deep and dark  
Where hidden currents run,  
These sometimes break old bonds and climb  
Into gateways to the sun.





## **BHOODAH, The Old Man.**

He sat under a pipal tree on a flat rock over against the great highway of all India: Bhoodah, the Old Man.

The highway had been broadened and lengthened and builded and made strong and perfect by English Government; and trees of great beauty and richness of perfume and flower and fruit and giving shadow to pilgrims had been planted by men who did the bidding of English Government in the land.

But **THIS** tree and **THIS** rock and Bhoodah had been seen in the same place since before the memory of any of the old men in the city; for even Gunputh Ram, who was the father of many sons and grand-sons and great-grand-sons, whose beard lay like curds of goats' milk on his bosom, whose eyes had yearned through the shadows of an unlifting night these

many seasons, even Gunputh Ram could only tell how, when he was so small that he reached up his little hand to the clasp of his father's fingers, when they went to the market place to buy spices and fruits for the feast of a great festival, he remembered passing by the pipal tree and the rock and Bhoodah and looking up to ask his father if the man who sat still and seemed so stern was holy: and his father answered him "He is old."

All the people who walked in the way saw Bhoodah and he saw the people; but he was never known to ask alms of any man.

At his side was a stained leathern pouch holding small bottles of potent drugs; but no one ever came to him to be cured of disease or pestilence or sores.

It was said in quiet places and in the evening, by some, that Bhoodah was learned in mysteries and had knowledge and understanding of hidden things; that the future was written in sure lines, even as the past, in the dark stone which hung on his breast.

His words were stern and few while the sun shone: but it was said that certain went to him in the night time and left silver coins in the corner of his cloth, carrying away his counsel; but no man **KNEW** this, because no man had ever been

there himself: only, it could be seen of any that silver coins were always in the corner of his cloth.

When Krishna Lal and Naraian Das came into the court against each other, in the matter about Krishna Lal's land and Naraian Das' daughter, all the world knew that Naraian Das said just what he did not mean to say and that the decree was against him because of it; but no one knew why he came at all, if he had no more wit than a jungle fowl to speak such words of simplemindedness!

While the world was wondering and saying in a low voice and with a mournful wag of the head and fingers passed lovingly through the beard, "Ah! Ah! The beauty of his wisdom is as the shining of yesterday's sunset, even the color of its glory is no more in the eyes of men, for shadow is fallen upon it! Where is the son of Naraian Das—Look now to him!" and while Krishna Lal was carrying home the decree and the damages and the daughter, Naraian Das stood in the deep shadow of a clump of bamboos at the bend in the road and watched the pipal tree and Bhoodah sitting on the flat rock.

His eyes were dreamful but there was fire in his heart.

He watched until the city slept and then he slipped out into the moonlight before the Old Man and spread his empty hands and accused him.



His passion of pain and loss and humiliation raged and tore him: and being impotent it raged the more.

Then Bhoodah said only "SO do children." Naraian Das stood and heard the Old Man speak till night began to wane and then he bent himself and crept to the feet of Bhoodah and leaned and listened.

And at day dawn he rose up from that place and went alone, with a look on his face as if he talked with Death.

His way was homeward and the fire in his heart had begun to consume his soul: but he thought it was well with him, for he had learned somewhat concerning patience and his feet had been taught how they ought to go in the bitter path of Revenge.

In this wise the lean hand of Bhoodah, the Old Man, the Sorcerer, laid brands upon the burning of enmity among the people, till smoking ashes only were in hearts where love had been; till treasures and little children were spilled into the clutch of sacrifice: and many mourned.

And while they mourned one came to them with comfort: a woman from a far country, whose hands were strange with gifts of healing and whose tones fell softly on the hearts of some smitten of sorrow.

Bhoodah had always cursed her people, the christians.

When they passed along the highway, toward the city, he would fold away his shoulder cloth and shake down his long, dank, filthy hair and stretch out his bony arms and call after them. Dark curses and horrid questions and unclean replies clung to his lips and lingered ringing on his breath: for so he hated them.

And all the people knew he hated them.

But this woman went down among the people in the Pestilence and touched them and laid clean ointment on their sores and told them such words out of her Book as made them breathe deep breaths of longing and ask "Where is your Prophet, Teacher, Healer, Isa? Take me to Him!"

And when it was told to Bhoodah how the people loved her and that they laid a name upon her head, he sent a message to her on the tongue of one, a shepherd.

So she went and standing meekly near the stone looked down into the dark shining of his eyes and saw the nervous, angry working of his hands and softly spoke, saying "It is mine to serve and I am come, for one has said you called me. Shall I sit beside you in your house, oh Wise Man, in your sweet house of cool, green leaves, oh Wise Man?"

And he said "Sit."

she spoke of birds and grasses and jungle creatures and lonely things and those that suffered.

Then he asked her "Why go you down into the Pestilence?"

And she said "For Isa."

"Why?"

"Because He loves them: and because He used to do in this same way and heal them."

And when she said these words he did not answer: but when she turned away, he laid "Peace" on her.

And in the passing of the days thereafter, her feet paused often near the rock of Bhoodah: and they spoke of many things.

One morning when he rose and stood on his flat rock under the pipal tree and drew his shoulder cloth over his hairy breast and shook one limb out, till the amulet buckle of his large-linked knee chain jingled in its socket, because the air was damp and all his bones ached in his body, a man came running from behind the lime and cactus hedge calling "Bhoodah! she who heals is stung by a black scorpion and is fallen, dying!"

Then Bhoodah stooped and caught the leathern pouch in his lean hand and ran till he stood over her still face and

crowded yellow ointment down her throat with one long finger, and spoke no word, save when he cast a pillow from beneath her head crying "OH Fools!"

But when her purple lips parted and a tide broke forth stained green, as if it were fresh juice of herbs pressed out and mixed with amber wine, he gathered still more ointment from his pouch and rubbed it on the wound and searched her face with glittering eyes till the stiff blood began to melt and ooze along its way in all her veins.

Then he rose up and went away, silent, as he had come: not looking upon those who waited near in vast astonishment, but passing by as if they were not.

At evening time he came again and looked on her, unsmiling, from the doorway. "Master, I take my life from thee this day and give thee thanks!" she said to him; and when he heard her voice grown faint and saw her face grown wan, black lightnings leaped athwart his eyes and deep lines came together on his swarthy brow, in cloudy mists of shadow mingling till his look was fearful.

"SO! they, the LEARNED—they, thy People, have preserved thee! Skill and cunning are in their hands! Who are WE that they should look on us!

Creatures unclean and outcasts do they cherish exceedingly—and prop their own with pillows up, to DIE!

Lo, I have lived full long and I have seen Fools since I was born, but I have never looked on Wise so like to simple—But they are wise and WHO are we! Tell me, with no more intelligence will they now keep thee?”

“They will keep me, Wise Man, fear not” said she “But did you save me only that I might hear your voice abuse my people?”

“That you might come and sit upon the rock again beside me—speaking.”

“I will come” she answered; and Bhoodah went his way.

And after days when she went out again among the people to heal and teach them, often passing near his place, she turned aside and sat and spoke.

So waxed the season and the heat grew fervent.

And those with fevers and with sores were borne to her by hands of kindred; and once, among the others, lay a man who had been stung by a black scorpion, dying. Then she turned and went out swiftly from her house and ran, calling to

Bhoodah on his rock to come and bring antidotes for one who perished from the sting of a black scorpion, even the same as she had been herself under his hand.

And all the people followed after her and called to him, because she called to him.

But Bhoodah heeded no more than the air had been as still as midnight; and only when she stood before his face, calling, would he lift up his eyes to look on her, saying "What man? What antidote?"

I am a poor man, Teacher, and an Ignorant! who am I and who my people, that WE should know concerning antidotes, or men with poisons! WE are not learned!"

And when she pleaded "Other sicknesses I heal and other suffering I serve, but to heal this I know not, and you know: turn not away, but come and save him! Ah have mercy and deny not!" The people cried with a loud voice "O have mercy!" and Bhoodah answered "Why should a man stretch out his hand to save a creature? shall he not surely die? and now, today, or then, tomorrow, who shall answer! and for what purpose will ye keep him?"

And when one came saying that he who had been stung was dead, the people turned away from Bhoodah fearing him: for he had knowledge how to save and would not.



Now Pestilence, like ferment, grew mighty in the fierce shining of the sun: and rain came not: and all the wells were foul: and all the air was heavy with the fever.

Creatures and men alike, cast head-long from the places where they stood, lay on the streets and turned dead eyes up to the burning heavens: till, driven of fear and quaking before the anguish, people gathered in their arms the forms of famished children and bound on their backs the scanty store of that they had to nourish and fled into the Jungle, leaving the city desolate with her dead.

But many fell down beside the pathway, smitten as they journeyed.

And in the midst walked she whom they called "healer," stooping to shed ministry of service on the failing and rising to bear forward in her hands the burden of a child new-orphaned.

Bhoodah walked also with parched corn and dates upon his shoulder; and in his hand the leathern pouch of potent drugs; but no man turned to him for healing.

His looks were on her fingers: and once he reached his hands to help her in the service, but no eye had seen them when they fell back empty.

So moved he after her among the people, till shadow of the plague closed round about him and he reeled against a tree and sank down slowly.

One, passing, tore the parched corn and the dates away and folded them in his own cloth: another said to her "Bhoodah is fallen;" and she turned her face and went and stooped above him, looking on his damp brow: and kneeled down, calling "Bhoodah!" softly. And when he heard her voice he lifted up his eyes full of new yearning.

"Oh Bhoodah, Wise Man, see, MY hands will serve you! And you have herbs to antidote ALL poison—why do you perish with the pouch beside you?"

"In me works poison more than that of Pestilence and for it I know no herb for healing. Tell me the antidote for Hatred!"

"Love," answered she.

"Tell me the antidote for Fear!"

"Hope," said the woman, while strange stillness folded all his limbs like shadow: and his words came faint "Oh woman from the Sunset Country, my heart has burned with hatred for your People, because they scorn the Ancient and be-



cause they have no learning! but your words have lived in me and many days have gathered testimony of the healing which you bring from far—the hand of Love—the voice of Hope—go—now—and tell—the young men!’’

And when his lips were cold, she rose and went her way among the people; and Peace lay on the face of Bhoodah in the moonlight and the stillness.



**The Physical is the Laboratory in which the  
Spirit must work out its experiments.**





## THE GREAT GOD RAM.

The Wellspring of Life, the City of the Sikhs, lay spent beneath the sun and sick for rain.

Fierce heat dragged out old secret moistures from between her stones and wrung up fumes of stench from hidden places. And winged pestilence rose up and sat upon her gates and cast death down upon the people, as plowmen fling forth grains of wheat at seed time.

The gods were angry.

Fathers of sons went early in the morning, to the Temple, bearing gifts and praying that the priests would earnestly perform their offices and render honor to the gods for them and pledge obedience for their children also.

Mothers lay upon their faces, before household shrines, quivering with fear and raining tears till they could weep no more; and then rose up and served their children ceaselessly through all the bitter heat of all the day.

The sacred Scripture of the Sikhs lay swathed in rich cloth wrought with gold, upon its dais beneath the great dome of the Golden Temple in the midst of her still lake. The wall about was deep and high and full of caves where holy men, grown weak by pilgrimage from far, stretched themselves out on damp stones in the dark to gather strength for bathing in the holy well.

These prayed; and all the priests prayed also; and the people bowed themselves and gave of all they had the utmost they could give, to win the gods back from their anger till they should send rain.

But it was not sufficient.

Then the priests went out at night time, along the narrow winding ways within the city walls and up and down between her gates. And when the morning came no father rose to go with gifts of grain or spice or uncut gem or fine wrought fabric toward the Temple gate; but each man lay and beat his brow upon the earth beside a woman at the household shrine. For in the night by all the paths the priests had trod a word had passed.

The gods required a sacrifice. A Perfect sacrifice.

It would be difficult. The foreign people who had come to rule the land and hold its multitudes in sure subjection to their government by strange relentless power, were ignorant of Custom. They had no gods. They gave not gold to gain their souls from death but sold their souls to death to gain more gold.

These could not understand a perfect sacrifice. They would disturb, preventing, and so cause shame. Therefore those working must move softly and the gates be kept.

Many children had been pledged unborn against this day. These their fathers knew. But not the women. Women will save one child and lose a race. The gods themselves watched not so tirelessly as did those mothers bending on the roofs above the slender panting children while they slept: knowing not that they were yet to work the sacrifice which should appease the gods and save the city, bringing rain.

They were due the gods. Were they not given by the gods, and others also? These were but one child from every house where any man had loved a woman unto that degree whereby he pledged his third child to the temple service if the gods would give a son to him and her before the time appointed should be passed. So might his house and honour stand;



and she remain his wife in peace, alone. And surely it was better to have one son and another child, which by good fortune might be a son also, rendering for the safety of these the third, than to have no son at all: but only the confusion of another marriage and a second woman to drive this one, with scornful words, dull eyed and heavy footed into servitude.

Also, the gods do only sometimes gather need for children; and if they are not called, the mothers may remain without fear being ignorant. If, being men, they are called for priesthood, that will be later: and a woman will let her son slip from between her fingers without sorrow if his sinews have grown strong. If, being but women, they are required for temple service, it will save the difficulty of their marriage; and no mother would keep her daughter till she is old, for without early marriage is disgrace.

So, in the evening of the third day after the word had passed, those fathers who had pledged children which were come to the age of running went up softly to the roofs where they lay and lifted them from beneath the hands of the women which bare them.

In that hour went up a great cry from the city. The first cry of the sacrifice. From the lips of many women it went up, on the hot throbbing air, past the temple spires, into the curtainless vastness toward the gods.

But they did not hear.

Priests and messengers who served the temples were out gathering the little children from the hands of their fathers, at the doorways and at the gates of courtyards and at the mouths of alleys. These carried them gently and refreshed them with water and kept them quietly and taught them in the night till near the dawn of day.

Before dawn came all the children had been taught that the gods were angry and had cursed the city that no rain could fall; that all the offerings of the people had been refused and now the sons of every house would die and every name in all the city would perish miserably in death and shame unless the voices of the little children could reach the gods. But if they could persevere and cry and not cease and the gods would hear and send rain, they should be called the children of the gods and lifted up in honour and borne in the hands of men and given rich garments and garlands and a great feast in the presence of all the people. Their fathers had rendered them up to do this; and their mothers were hidden away from them.

Into their hands they put cymbals and bells and drums and every manner of instrument to beat with the hands; and placed them in companies: arranged with those older, such as could run with sure feet, before; and the younger, whose

steps were uncertain, behind; and back of each company went four strong men who served the temples carrying long staffs pointed with sharp steel.

The cry of the children was to the name of the great god Ram.

Ai, Ram! Ram!

Ai, Ram! Ram!

Hum lok ko pani do!

Hum lok ko pani do!

Hum lok ko pani do!

Ai, Ram! Ram!

Ai, Ram! Ram!

So they were sent forth at the beginning of dawn, to go forward through the city up and down, to beat with their hands and to cry ceaselessly until the gods should hear and save the city for their sakes sending rain.

They went forth slowly because their feet were young and not swift. They went bravely, lifting up their faces to the dawn and beating their small hands and crying with their voices clear and high.

This was the second cry of the sacrifice, which rose at dawn; for the first was smothered against the earth, deep in the houses where their mothers lay.

But the gods heard not.

Then the sun rose up and the children's voices broke and failed in the parching pain of their throats: and they called bitterly for the mothers whose faces were turned away from them upon the earth. And the heat smote down between the high walls and wavered in quick quivering waves before their eyes and struck them on the brow and on the breast and with shrieks they turned to fly and met the sharp steel points of the staffs and went back—forward, toward the sun. Then the knees failed and they fell: for they could not sit because of the sharp steel; or eat or drink for there was naught; or cry any more for they were choked with the pain of the striving blood in their breasts—so they died. One by one. And each was carried by a messenger softly and laid in the place of sacrifice near some temple. And the space where it had been was filled by a fresh child, that the number should not wane for the gods to see.

The day went over slowly with the stain of blood in its face. And the children of the sacrifice staggered forward so long as they endured to live. And the numbers of the companies were not allowed to wane.

And the cries went up on into the fierce night heat. And the places of sacrifice near the temples were filled with long rows of the little bodies of children which had cried to the gods in vain.

Then, in the midst of the night, after the raging anguish of strong sobbing men was spent; when the spirits of some mothers had gone out after the sacrifices they had given—out through the pitiless haze of heat, up through the measureless heights of space, toward the gods—at that time there fell on a roof one drop of rain: and on seven other roofs fell drops of rain.

And a cry went up from the city so mighty that it tore the heavens open. And the rain came.

It was the third cry of the sacrifice.

Men rushed like mad beasts along the streets toward the great temple, each man to see if his own yet lived.

The children which remained were caught up every one and carried high with shouts of honour and praise. Some were laid in their father's arms alive and some just before their spirits got away.

Many men stood with their hands empty and returned so to the women; having no child to give back alive. These went at dawn to the place where the sacrifice was burned.

At the same hour a great feast was made for the children which remained and they were given rich garments and garlands of tuberoses and marigolds and jasmine flowers and were called the children of the gods before all the people.







**The language of Form**

**is like the rolling of the Spheres:**

**And the song of Color**

**is like the Song of Life.**





In manus padme hum.

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# **Ibn-i-Mahmud.**

## **A Tale of the Murri Hills.**

In the deep breast of a forest clothed mountain a low cave wherein Day never looked lies silent.

From the beginning of the Ages Darkness has wrought and mixed her mystic potions there.

Above the cave Himalaya flaunts the never tarnishing jewels on her regal brows into the very face of heaven: her blazing crests overlap their several lustres and bind a matchless tiara down upon that solitary peak.

Here for a thousand years, have come the children of a certain tribe to seal their own.

In the time of the budding of new growth they gather and when the pine cones fall.

Every man who is a father, in the name of his generation.

From the direction of all winds they gather and sit together before the face of their chief in council.

A hundred torches flare red upon a thousand spears.

In the midst is a basket of bread prepared by the mothers of sons and a jar of water drawn by young maidens from forest fountains; a jungle cock also and a cup for the sacrifice blood.

For when the man-child has come to the age of running, not with the soft uncertain steps of the little one guarded along the rugged ways by its mother's hand, but with a foot like the foot of the mountain he-goat when he rises before the dawning and looks toward the east for light. When the young lithe form is like the form of his father but not yet half so great in stature. When the eye has learned to scan with a glance as swift as the sharp blades of light that cleave the darkness of the great spaces in the monsoon time, the heights and the depths of the primeval forest: and the ear is grown sure and keen like the ear of a young pantheress suckling her cubs in the early morning when her mate has returned to her not again with meat through the long night. When the noise of his going is softer than the earliest breath of day and not an ear

in the deep still jungle can discern his coming. Then his father leads the man-child down into the midst of the gathering of the sons of all his people.

So Ibn-i-Mahmud stood; and his father the chief rose up and spoke. "Hear my voice oh my children! Hear me now oh my sons! For behold it is I who for many days have been with you. Surely it is even I who have anointed with the wine of sacrifice the brows of your young men! But until this day have I never brought before you a man-child to call ME father. Rise up now I pray you and tell me: stand up before my face and let your voice be heard: if it has ever been that my hand has withheld itself from justice or my tongue from councils of mercy. Come then for that reason, I pray you, and look on the man-child whose head has never yet been covered: whose hair falls until this day even below the striving of his bosom. See if his limbs are comely and if the beauty of his countenance beseemeth him a prince.

Lay on him the Hand of his people! Touch him with the life-blood of the Forest! Call him by the name of a man among his Fellows! and let him eat with his Kinsmen!"

And he ceased speaking.

Then the old men came first and after them the young men to look on the man-child.



And they led him to the midst where was the sacrifice: and they said to him "What shall be the Sign of the young Ibn-i-Mahmud against the day when he sits over the council in his father's stead?" and he said "The head and the tail of a fish, as they were once severed from the body by a knife and laid in my hand."

And when the breast of the jungle cock had been pierced by a sharp blade, they took of the warm blood as it dripped into the cup and drew the sign on the brow of the boy—the head and the tail of a fish. And they laid the sharp blade, wet from the bird's heart, into one hand of the boy and the cup of blood they gave into his other hand.

And the oldest of the old men came first, and laid bare his own breast for the boy to touch it with the sharp blade; and stooped his lips to the brim of the cup: and dipped into the cup and took of the blood enough to mark the outlines of the sign on his own bosom: and when it was finished, said, "For the blood of my life and for the wine of my drink have I taken the sign of Ibn-i-Mahmud against his day—the head and the tail of a fish."

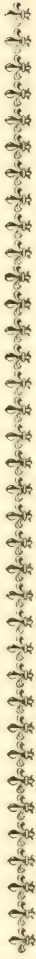
And all the others did likewise after him.

And out of the basket they broke bread and out of the jar poured water, and the man-child was given to eat and to drink with them and was called Ibn-i-Mahmud a man and a prince among his fellows.

And one, a silver-smith, was fetched with his pot of fire and his tools: and he wrought and made a ring of pure silver being five fishes in which was laid a separate tail against one head.

So the sign was hidden and yet preserved—the head and the tail of a fish.

And the man-child wore the ring strung on a leathern thong about his neck.



Above the eternal snows of high Himalaya, unmoving on the pulseless heart of limitless blue deeps, a Kite poised watchful.

Below, six and eighty rain clouds spread their filmy plumage upon the mellow air of intertwining valleys, coquetting with earth's spring charms, till, in abandonment of homage, they beat their iridescent wings upon her bosom and were folded away out of sight by the clinging tendrils of a myriad brooding boughs.

The pathways of the forest, in irregularly radiating lines, led bearded men by devious ways from great distances until

the fathers of many tribes were met together in his cave of council before the face of Abu Rahim Baksh, the aged chief. Swarthy limbed, lithe, sinuous, with dark inscrutable faces and fierce restless eyes burning beneath heavy brows, they mingled matted beards and breathed as one man, listening.

The old chief stood and spread out his palms upon them and spoke, "Peace be on you, oh my brothers! Peace be on you, oh my sons! Who among you knows not that the strong hand of a strange people is on us: and now therefore are we come together to take counsel.

From a far country and from a land hidden by great waters, come they. With marvelous implements of war and living chariots which breathe the fire; with steel weapons also: with horses and with dromedaries. Who shall stand against them!

Even they who have cast their covering upon the peoples of the plains! even they who carry hence the grain and the jewels in ships! the silk fabrics also, wrought by the hands of women!

Speaking a language which was not known in ancient days, they turn to mockery the tongues of learned peoples! Eaters of unclean flesh, they spread pollution in the way of pilgrims! Gathering richness to their own country, they fill the stomachs of the young men with sweetmeats so that they may have no wisdom to consider it!

Hear now my words! IN THE DAY WHEN THESE PEOPLE STOOD AGAINST THE SONS OF AFGHANISTAN,  
THEY WERE MET BY HILL MEN!"

A great shout leaped and roiled from the mouth of the cave; reverberating upon the rocks it sped away into the fastnesses of the forest and thrilled the pulses of living creatures in hidden places.

"In those days these people took an oath with the hill tribes and the hill tribes took an oath also with them, that they should not come forward upon the margins of the lands of the hill people: and that the hill people should not combine against them to remove the margins. That the margins should remain and not be moved.

Now behold after these many days have the people of a strange nation done violence to their oath and forsaken their covenant with us. Shall we not therefore combine now together, to maintain the margins of our lands against them? Or shall the generations after us eat the salt of strangers and serve with clasped hands and eyes fixed upon masters!

Has the land of the Hills no shelter for her children? Or like the creatures of holes in the earth shall we seek covering! Are there not young men enough to reach those who come upon us and slay them? Or are their spirits infirm in them before the weapons of war which strike from a great distance!"

A low vibrating response rolled through the cave. "There ARE YOUNG MEN!"

"Hear me again, oh, my brothers! Behold the messengers from our borders have brought us messages and we have a saying also from the foreign people, that they desire only to build an highway through our lands. Is it an highway for pilgrims? There is sufficient. Is it an highway for merchandise? There is no requirement. Is it an highway for the multitudes of an army? Even a FOOL may discern that this is so!

WHO ARE THESE that they shall break in pieces the inheritance of our fathers from the beginning!

Hear now my question and answer me. Is any found among you who shall show us the mind of the strange people, to know when they come upon us and to measure the weight of their numbers against us?"

The silence pulsed with the rhythm of hard breathing.

Then a young man stood up before the chief. Of great stature, he carried the likeness of a tiger in his movement.

Lifting both hands to his brow, he bent before the old man in a slow salute.

A low murmur crept through the cave as each man said softly "Ibn-i-Mahmud, the head and the tail of a fish!" Like the breath of a lost wind it fanned the ear lightly and was gone.

“My brain has become as ashes of incense! also, my heart is turned into wine and my liver into milk! Surely a young man, if he is a fool only, will speak at this time: but if he has any wisdom he will turn his face toward the accomplishment of purposes.

Let me choose I pray, other three men from among you: these will I take with me.

I will go down into the city of Murri where the mighty ones of the sheepfaced people do gather together in the hot season; coming up from the plains they sit in the hills that their brains may not melt by reason of the sun. Here do they require to be lifted and borne in jampans upon the shoulders of men, for their legs have neither strength nor cunning!

To the bearers of jampans they pay a price for wages; at the turning of every moon they lay coins of silver into every man's hand. Have I a heavy ear that I shall not hear, or a fool's understanding that I shall not learn? Even at the feet of their great ones will I sit and serve them, while they tell the tale among themselves!

Wait ye therefore patiently and I will send back a runner with the waxing of every moon and with the waning of it; and when he opens his mouth to speak, hear him; for his words will be the words I have given him concerning this matter.



That which falls into my ear shall spring up in his heart and shed leaves into your hands and bear fruit for the generations of future days. I have spoken."

And when he was silent a turmoil fell upon those who listened: for they said, "He is the chief's ONLY SON!"

But when morning dawned again the third time, four men of mighty strength moved together toward the city of Murri, which rested a journey of five days and five nights below them, upon the foothills of the high Himalayas.



The early train from Lahore left a hundred and fifty natives of divers sorts and three Europeans at the Rawal Pindi station, exchanged mail bags, took on water, reloaded and moved northward toward Peshawar.

The natives slipped away out of sight and the buzzing of their jangling tongues ebbed finally into a lonely stillness.

On a low couch in an inner room, a long man lay motionless. The body was covered with a soft scotch travelling rug

folded in straight lines. The head was bound with a linen towel overlaid with a circular ice-bag which was replenished by the white hand of a pale, stately woman whose set lips and watchful eye spoke her interest in the sick man to be vital.

A hold-all full of bedding, a Gladstone bag and several grips lay in a heap on the floor.

A tall girl in a white flannel gown entered the room with swift noiseless movements and quickly lifted the luggage to the door, where she rendered it into the grasp of coolies.

Returning she said gently "Are you ready Auntie? Shall I bring them in?" and receiving an affirmative sign she beckoned four men to enter.

They were tall, muscular, hardy looking hill-men, with dark faces, and heavy beards. They folded the nerveless body in their arms and bore it slowly. Without the door a jampan had been placed, filled with quilts and blankets and many pillows. Into the yielding support of these they lowered the man's frame.

The long white fingers had never loosed their clasp of his head and now they guarded it into its resting place and arranged the ice around it with unerring touch.

The four men took their places and raised the jampan till its poles rested on their shoulders.



A like conveyance for each of the ladies followed and one for the luggage.

The procession moved at good speed over the rolling plain for an hour and then began to ascend, by a zig-zag tonga road, winding in and out around the spurs and shoulders of the lower hills till the plains were lost to view and only a gigantic mountain stairway reached up about them into the white heights of heaven.

So on and up as the day waxed and waned. Pausing only to re-fill the bag with ice or adjust the cushions beneath the unfeeling limbs.

Now the valleys below began to grow vague with filmy clouds, and a soft, warm mist crept about them, breaking all the sharp outlines and softening the distances. The mist thickened into steam and finally shed itself upon the earth in rain. Then all the water courses of heaven were loosed and the hills spread out their hands and let new cataracts leap through their fingers.

After the jampons had been protected by mackintoshes, they were lifted and borne on in silence.

But the pathway grew slippery to the feet and the men balanced and swayed upon the increasingly precipitous ascent.

No word was spoken until they reached a certain spot where, as by a single impulse, every man lowered his burden till four jumpans rested on the drenched rocks.

The oldest man of them all stood forward and addressed himself to the elder of the two women, "It is enough! that which man can possibly do, even that we have done. Behold, the way behind is smooth and safe, the way before is steep and there are ledges where, if but one foot slip, five lives shall surely perish. We ask not for money. We go. It is written by the hand of Allah! What man will deny this. Peace be on thee and on thy house!"

The ladies offered reward heaped upon reward, but the men turned away sullenly and were soon lost to view.

A half hour went by. The mail tonga must soon pass. Every fourth tonga was an ambulance reserved for military service. It might be occupied or they might not be able to secure the use of it, but there was a hope.

The girl stood out in the middle of the way when the bugle of the tonga was first heard and as it rounded a corner and appeared she waved a cloth and shouted.

The driver blew his bugle ceaselessly till his plunging horses were within a few paces of her body; then he reined them rudely back upon their haunches and demanded the meaning of this unlawful—she interrupted him with a stern com-

mand to perform his duty and not waste that time which might mean the loss of his position to him and what was infinitely more valuable to the world. He listened while she explained that here was a great and learned one who was smitten by the sun's heat while traveling on the plains. His wife and niece had started from Rawal Pindi with him in a jampan because it would be smoother and less jarring than a tonga; but the jampanis had deserted on account of the roads and they had been waiting for the next ambulance; and now it was the proper time to move quickly and accomplish the change without delay. And when she added that she saw a new uniform and a dinner of spiced kid for that man who would do these things skillfully, he slipped down from his seat without a word and the change was made, leaving only the four empty jampanis by the roadside.

The ambulance tonga was a canvas covered, two-wheeled cart, without springs or seats.

The sick man was stretched upon bedding in the interior, his head resting on the knee of his wife, beside the driver, while the girl was cramped near his feet at the rear end.

Seven miles lay between them and the city of Murri.

Aroused by the violence of the tonga's movement, the man began to roll his head from side to side, moaning like a sick child. As the horses floundered and the tonga lurched the moaning grew heavier, till, when four miles had been accomplished, a deep groan came with every labored breath.

From the growth of the jungle at the roadside a man appeared. His great body was heavily clothed, from head to foot, with the old-straw colored, coarse looking, but soft feeling material worn by the hill tribes, which is made from the hair of the mountain goat. A softer quality of the same material bound his head in heavy folds. His limbs were closely bandaged from ankle to knee with overlapped straps of goat hair felt. His feet were protected by leathern sandals of many knotted thongs. He strode easily beside the tonga.

The size of his person and the strength which lived in every attitude might have been oppressive to the girl's sense of unprotectedness, but for the wistful expression on the sensitive features and the almost pleading look in the large eyes.

The countenance expressed a curious combination of unapproachable hauteur and vague, subtle, outreaching, child-like tenderness.

Stooping his head slightly he lifted one hand and with his finger tips touched his brow between the eyes. The hand was long; the fingers slender and peculiarly flexible.

“Peace be on thee! oh daughter of a great people! Behold a manbearer stands before thy face and his heart cleaveth to thy service. With me are three others and there walks no man in all the Hills who is able to cast one of us to the ground. For strength and for swiftness we are thine to serve thee.”

The women consulted together as to whether it would be wise to trust the sufferer again upon the shoulders of bearers, for the sake of the few remaining miles. But he himself interrupted them, in a fretful tone, full of pain, saying that the man should be sent away and the noise of the voices hushed.

The girl laid her finger upon her lips and then spread her hands toward the form lying prostrate, with a protecting gesture.

The man lifted both hands to his brow and swept his lofty head forward, till it was near her feet, in a strong, electric movement. Slowly lifting himself he allowed the tonga to gain by the space of about ten paces and then resumed his following.

When the tonga turned past the Dak Khana, above the Bazaar, in the city of Murri and followed the old road which leads to Kashmir, along the shoulder of the great hill, finally pausing at the latticed verandah of a European bungalow, the man stood still at a distance of the casting of two stones in the rear.

He waited till servants came out of the house and bore the sick man within. Still he waited till all the wraps and traveling utensils had been carried after.

He flashed a keen glance into the face of a liveried courier who came running out, crying "Room for an Officer's messenger after the Great Surgeon, Room!" The man's ungainly, head-long speed showed him to be a servant from the Plains and no Hill-man. "Fool! his legs are made of wood!" muttered the man bearer; and turning he fixed an intent gaze upon the bungalow. Not a fibre of all his body stirred, save by the heaving of his heavy chest and the jar of strong heart throbs. A slow fire began to burn in the deep darkness of his eyes, shedding scintillations of light through an intangible veil.

When the tonga was gone and the sufferer had been disposed in comfortable wise, the girl stepped out into the veranda and glanced through the latticed wall, upward, along the slope of the rock-shelving hill, looking for the Surgeon.



A tall figure stood motionless in the slanting fall of rain. From the doorway arch she beckoned the man to draw near.

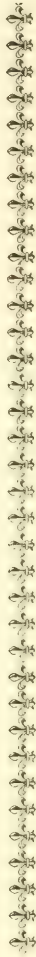
Then the fire in his eyes leaped up and caught the veil of shadow and consumed it in the fervent heat of a fierce blaze. His approach was smooth and swift over the slippery road and he stood silent at a respectful distance. "We shall require man-bearers, oh son of the Hills, to lift and carry the stricken one when he is able to be taken out for air; and he is very heavy, so bring your strong ones, after some days, when, if you inquire for service, it may be found of you." "Sure of foot and fleet, oh Lady, they will lift and carry him!" Her eyes followed him with an absent-minded, unseeing gaze while he walked away with long, elastic strides.

Near the Dak Khana three Hill-men approached and followed him in silence. They passed through the down-wind-ing Bazaar and descended still further till a solitary stone hut closed the pathway; it leaned upon the bosom of a jagged cliff and one corner jutted over an edge of rock and peered full fifty feet into the shadows of a narrow chasm below.

Unbarring the door he advanced within saying, "Enter ye also with me, my brothers, and let us eat and drink that we may have strength to continue faithful."

The attitude of the three in his presence was characterized by a certain humility, howbeit they showed to be every one his senior. And when he gave bread into their hands they spoke softly and said "By the oath of the sign of Ibn-i-Mahmud— —the head and the tail of a fish! Peace be on thee and on thy house, oh Prince!"

"And on my people" answered he.



The city of Murri stood and gazed and wondered. All day, since early morning a line of jaded men had been filing down past the Dak Khana on the Hill-road to Headquarters. The Black Mountain Expedition under English Government to open a way through the Hills for a Military Road into Thibet, was returning!

Did any one know why? Not the men themselves. They only knew that after four months of dogged, hard climbing and no fighting to mention, they had reached a spot where there appeared a show of resistance.

A deep ravine lay between them and the natives. For several days English guns had blown shot and shell across



the chasm, fairly mowing down those who advanced within range. Then came the word from the commanding officer of the expedition to prepare for return.

The subordinate officers obeyed, sullen; and the men muttered and scowled and came down the long, dry marches with curses between their teeth, every day of all the way.

And now they were face to face with the civilized world again; battered and worn, with swollen faces and red eyes and sore feet, having accomplished—nothing!

When the great-limbed Seaforth Highlanders, in their radiant plaids and the last detachment of artillery had passed down through the city and might no more be followed by straining glances, the Europeans of Murri set themselves to discover quickly the meaning of it all.

Servants in gorgeous liveries were sent at full speed from house to house with notes of enquiry. Groups of such messengers waited near the gates of all the diplomatic officers. But no man knew an answer to the much-mouthed ‘‘why?’’

After several months it became known that Government had set her seal of approval upon the action of the com-

manding officer of the Black Mountain Expedition in ordering its return. Then Public Interest, like a kettle, began to sputter again, for a little; but the coals failed and it cooled into silence.

On the crest of the highest of all the hills upon which the city of Murri sits like a queen, is an overleaning rock, shaped like the side-wise craning neck of a bird. Upon this rock stood the figure of a man in the morning of that day when the Black Mountain Expedition passed through the city returning.

From the Kashmir road below he looked like a little child or like a large bird; but if the most powerful man had been taken out of the expedition and placed beside him, they had stood equal.

He lifted up his face in the early morning and breathed deeply. He reached out his hands above his head to the higher hills northward, murmuring softly "Have I done well, oh my brothers, have I done well?" Then he bent his head and arched his fingers over his eyes, searching with a deep-reaching gaze, into the gloom of the jungle.

The dawn cast weird lights upon features whose statuesque repose masked but poorly a spiritually-iridescent consciousness.

The long narrow ribbon of marching men, as it came into view, colored the serpentine course of the road and emphasized it in distinct outline. From his high place the man looked down on them.

“Oh, hungry and much-eating and unsatisfied! Have ye not enough, that ye must wrench and tear with your fangs, like a wild beast, at the bowels of the mighty hills?

Did they come together, oh Foot-sore and Leg-weary? Did they gather together against ye, my sons?

Did they come from many ways like the rushing together of winds in a dry place? Then why did ye not wait and meet them? They had words to speak softly in your ears, oh Strong Ones!

Seasons have not changed twice since the city saw you pass upward with smiling faces to the slaughter of the Hill Tribes; and now are ye come again with looks fallen down and angry.

And ye have not slain— —ye have not yet slain my people!

See, ye know it not, but I bid ye a parting! I have been among ye long enough, oh Sheep-Faced! Oh Eaters of Unclean Flesh! Oh Simple-Minded!

I have served sitting at the feet of your great ones and I have heard their tale and it has lived in me! And they

have laid coins of silver in my hand for wages, with grinning faces! but I take hence a better Price with me!

Know ye not, oh Fools, a prince has served ye and ye have not paid him?

I have gone down into mud and my hand has fallen upon a Pearl!

A Name has grown up in me like a lotus bloom and lifted up her face and smiled and floated. The unfolding of her richness sheds light and her leaves hold a dew of healing for weariness!

Will ye search for her, oh Fear Stricken? Will ye send runners crying in the streets of your city of Hirelings to find the lost maiden?

Surely the Keepers of goats will tell you many tales of long fanged creatures.

**WHO DOES NOT KNOW THAT TIGERS LOVE THE BLOOD OF WOMEN."**

A strange smile played on his lips while he turned and walked down by a winding path, but the city saw him no more.











**In the healing of another's wound is divine  
recompense.**

**In the bearing of another's load comes divine  
strength.**

**In the sacrifices of Love-service grows divine  
beauty.**





## **PRIESTS OF HANUMAN.**

### **A Fragment.**

An old Sambhur paused on the brow of a low hill and shook back his mane and lifted up his nose and sniffed the dawn of day.

The smell of it was good and his grey nostrils quivered wide, drinking deep draughts of cool moist air.

Brooding vapours turned on white wings and went down the west toward the sea.

The grasses were rested and looked up: but the trees were languorous and enamoured of the damp shadows of night.

The river murmured upon the jagged rocks of her mid-current and crooned softly between the overleaning vines

and branches of her borders; but turning a slow corner she hurried forward in frightened silence through a broad smooth flagstoned basin, which had been wrought and laid by the hand of man, and then leaped into the forest to lose herself in perpetual darkness there.

The Vindhas lifted their rugged shoulders against the north and clothed the land with richness by reason of their springs rolling in wild abandonment from the deep breasts of many hills to fill Nerbudda's gracious tide with milk and wine against the seasons.

Nerbudda's self was sacred to the people: and to every creature good: because her gift was like the gift of mothers; for when all the earth was parched and full of deep cracks yawning beneath a heaven white and cloudless, and rain forsook the land, and heeded not the voiceless pain of failing things or grasses fallen prostrate or young birds or leaves grown grey, dust laden: and heat and thirst and famine all increased, till creatures crept forth from their hot lairs at evening and moved in company who had been enemies but for sore suffering, then she yielded up her pure tides to satisfy their utmost craving: nor denied to any cringing outcast Jackal or to any creeping unclean of them all, but gave and freely; as one gives alms when he prepares a wedding for his son.

The rose and amber radiance of dawn fell into all the hearts of all the birds: and wordless songs came pulsing up from roots of growing things.

The Sambhur lifted high his head again and spread the fan of one ear toward the wind, while he breathed twice; then he leaped the fallen trunk of a storm-blasted tree, and fled on swift springing feet so light the bended grasses lifted up their fronds and bells with bold fronts to deny any had gone their way.

Sudden there fell a rustling on the branches, and swift along the river's brim sped the sharp, plaintive cry of monkeys, beating down through all the startled stillness of the morning with their wailing voices. These turned and those turned, hurrying away in one direction: with fearless leaps and clinging hands and ceaseless chattering, and those same plaintive cries, at intervals, bringing answers: till when the sun had climbed his heavens all the air was shivering with shrieks of monkeys, leaping along the highways of those trees which grow where flows the sacred river at the feet of Vindhya's hills.

And far to east and far to west the tabernacles of the forest bent their arched domes on congregations still increasing.

And far to north and far to south the voice of mourners mourning and sending messages.

The villagers and women diligently searching after herbs and children tending goats and labourers among the driftings of the hills and on the open slopes—which had been some time through the ages wasted by nomad tribes who turned aside from their wild journeyings and burned a space out from the ancient forest to make land bare for their seed planting—and holy men, who meditate apart from others of their kind—walking in solitary paths among the avenues of patriarch banyan trees, or brooding on consecrated rocks, fingering dark stones and amulets quaint graven with mysterious designs— and all the Silent Minstrels and the Priests of Hanuman, the monkey-headed god, and every man who toiled at any craft, heard the shrill calls along the margins of the forest, and laid aside device and tool and waited, listening; so that men and creatures heeded from their divers places and knew that by some evil death had fallen on a chief among his kind: upon some monkey who was mourned of many among all his people.

Then the Priests who minister before the altars of the forest in the name of Hanuman, the monkey-headed god, rose up and girt themselves and followed after: winding up and down among the foothills of the Vindhya, and dipping their brown feet with prayers and their stern brows with curses into all the singing streams along their journey, while

they followed the people in the branches who were kindred to him, the smitten: until the shadow of a rock leaned on them, aslant rich grasses, by the margin of a wayward pool, turbulent and noisy with the language of a fountain just above it.

And beside the rock, stretched his full length upon fresh leaves, a wounded monkey lay, with shining restless eyes and rapid moving, voiceless lips and nerveless, heavy limbs and laboured breathing.

Above his place and by his side and far below him all the branches bowed themselves beneath the weight of monkeys, sitting silent in their places; save here and there a local chattering broke the stillness for a moment, where some dry branch snapped, refusing to bear its burden.

Near his head, spread out upon the leaves, a white silk kerchief, bearing in one corner an English letter wrought in needle work. This was lifted by an aged Priest and folded in the thick windings of his loin-cloth. 'Behold the Token ---ye my brothers who serve with me in the name of Hanuman---behold the Token which shall find and seal the hand of bloodshed unto torment.'



And his fellows answered him, "We see the Token and we serve with thee, oh Learned, to find the hand of blood-shed and to seal it unto torment, in the name of Hanuman!"

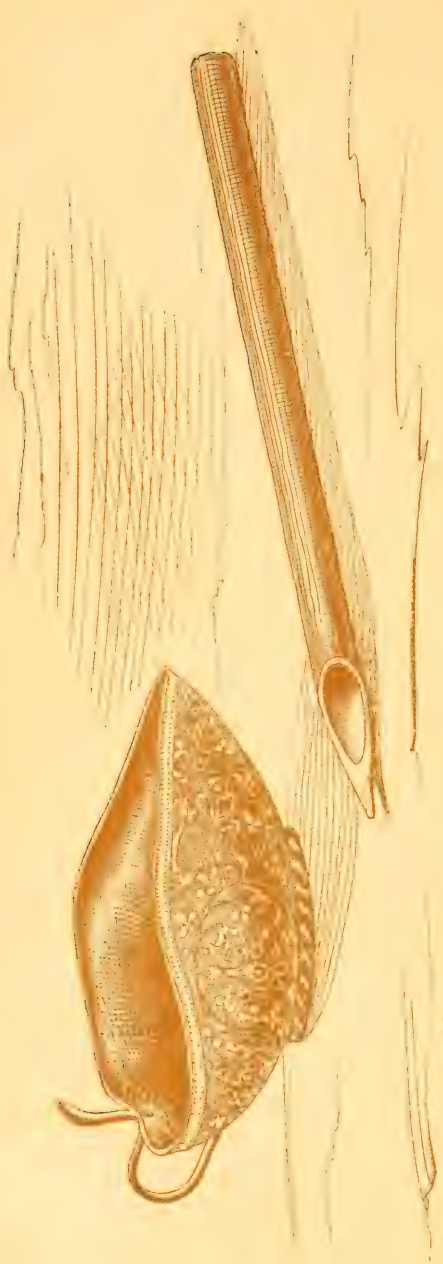
And when they had spread offerings of fruit and flowers upon the grasses, they turned away their faces from the fountain, and traced a path by moonlight to the village.



**Patience is the perfume of  
Courage and Faithfulness  
blended in the crucible of a Soul  
by the Super-alchemic forces  
of Divine Law.**







40 N. 1/2

In the form of this book and its pages the Author desires to humbly and affectionately recognize the labor and patience, beyond calculation, which has been expended by Hindu men in the printing by hand of India's vast literature. One leaf of it is shown as the Frontispiece. The kind of lamp by which they have worked at night and the kind of reed pen they have used, may be seen on the opposite page.







## BROKEN YARNS.

With threads of gold and threads of yellow silk  
The fabric of the cloth of gold is wrought;  
But every yarn of silk and gold the weaver works  
Apart from every other yarn with patience first.  
The silk entangles quickly, but is strong to bear:  
The gold neath any touch save his will break:  
Sometimes his hands draw backward broken ends:  
Sometimes the yarns grow knotted in his mesh:

The work, when done, lies smooth and clear and fair;  
Its glory gleams unbroken by a mar.

But few have seen the weaver at his task  
What time its beauty ached in mystery.

Pass by with me and watch. I point the strands  
Of broken yarns which yet the Weaver weaves.  
His work is all unfinished. We but dream  
The mystic splendor of a Cloth of Gold.

# I.

The sun had dipped into the sea and offerings had been made to all the gods.

The mantras had been said by twice-born priests for all the ceremonies of the temple customs; and now the henna-stained, bird-throated girls who dance were weaving filmy drapings like the dawn of day about their smooth round limbs against the marriage feast when they should work a spell upon the souls of wedding guests and bring back silver to the temple store.

Those who wrought in horn and ivory had folded all their tools in the loose ends of loin cloths and were mingled in the highway with carvers in sandal and ebony and teak and cedar-wood and those who fashioned gold and silver and all metals.

And jewel merchants in white linen walked unheeding near to those who graved the secret potent signs on amulets and on gems.

Nobles sate severely grave on their high steeds slow pacing to the music of begemmed caparisons.

But grain merchants and those who sold spices and fruits, stood upright every man in his own stall and cried aloud to each who passed his way that he should pause and buy of him and not of any other, if he would be profited.

And down through all the narrow lanes and alleys of the city went tired feet of tired men bearing some small provision; and ever these were pressed aside while noisy followings of those in gold embroidery found comfortable passage through the space made ready.

Deep in the dark heart of the city, beneath the slender ribbon of a sky barred out by high stone walls, a solitary vehicle moved slowly. No grooms ran on before; none followed after. A tall, lean, one-eyed Hindu coachman sat alone on his high seat. A foreign woman, clothed in white, with blue eyes and with red-gold hair sat, with a look of waiting on her face, within.

The horse stepped cautiously, in creature kindness, lest his feet should bruise the limbs of some spent pariah in the path.

Slowly the Hindu drove on through the shadows till, by a high stone wall, barren, threatening, he came upon the figure of a woman, crouched and shaken by the bitter stress of anguish. The low tones of her wailing smote the air un- certainly: and when he stopped, the very silence seemed to listen. And he leaned and called "Great Lady, one is fallen mourning on the earth and lifts not up her body from before the creature's hoof to save it."

And she who was called lady came down out of her carriage seat into the roadside and went before and knelt and laid her hands in strength and tenderness upon the other and spoke, saying "Sister! tell me the sorrow! see, I am a woman: trust me!"

Then the covered head was lifted up and lo! the brows were bare; the head was naked, shaven. The face was young and had been subtly fair; delicate, rounded, lacking nought to beauty, ere it had been robbed of all the silken, softening graces of its hair.

But the eyes were full of yearning anguish: full of nameless terror; and when she stood, her one scant garment

drawn about to snleld her nakedness, every line of all her body spoke the quickening pangs of that new rear which was upon her.

She fixed the hungry gaze of her great eyes upon the bending face above her for one long moment; then from her quivering lips brake forth her story.

How she had been pledged from little childhood by her father to the first son of that great house beyond the wall.

How she had been wed according to the customs of her people, duly.

How she had borne two sons to him in season: strong, beautiful.

How she had not burdened him with any daughter.

Had been obedient to him and to his mother: serving before her face and doing all the duties of a daughter in meekness, silently.

But the curse of cholera fell upon him and the goddess would not relent, though she had offered fruits and temple cloths; for he stretched himself upon a mat before her feet and perished.

She had caught her baby in her arms: a boy three seasons old: and held him fast against her fear-numbed breast: upon her helpless striving heart: up near her dumb throat.

But they tore him from her and cast her back into a darkened chamber; and rent the jewels from her hair and arms and ankles: making bare her bosom which had borne the honorable adornment of a wife and mother. And they unbound the decent drapery of her covering and took away her garments: leaving her unclothed and in the darkness.

Then a woman had brought a coarse red cloth and spat upon her and cried to her that she was cursed: no more the daughter, sister, mother, wife to any, but accursed: but a WIDOW and ACCURSED.

And when she had spread the coarse red cloth and folded it about her for a covering, they led her rudely out and in a lighter place a barber's blade had shaved away the crown of all her beauty: the shining perfumed locks which held his kisses and the soft strokings of her children's hands.

And when the bearers of the dead had carried out his body to its burning, she had been thrust down the stairway after them and then the heavy gate had closed behind.

And while she stood there trembling and listened to the mourners crying after that the bearers bore, which she



might not follow, since the strong laws of that strange ruling nation had forbidden that widows burn, a young child's voice moaning "Oh mother! take me to my mother!" had floated through an upper window, out on the air above the wall, smiting down upon her heart and cleaving it.

Then she cast herself upon the gate and beat her head upon it, crying mightily to those within to render back her children to her hands for one last parting.

But the gate moved not.

And when she sank down, spent with striving, twilight had fallen; and one seized her and dragged her captive and locked her close and kept her many days till he grew petulant of her mournings and released her.

And now she was returned to watch the window of that chamber where her children slept.

No figure could be seen above its high ledge, but the flickering wick burning in oil was set so on the floor that shadows strode athwart the upper wall and showed, in outlines grown gigantic, the shapes of those who moved beneath.

Now passed the veiled head of a woman: now a drinking pot was lifted by phantom hands: and now the round curves

of a young child's arm reached up in supplication and the clear tones of a young child's voice rang high and vibrant  
"Give me to drink! I thirst! I thirst!"

Then the Hindu widow leaping forward stretched her naked, empty arms and cried out so her tones thrilled swift along the pulses and smote the heart in its mid beat of those who heard.

"'Tis he! 'tis he! my son! my beautiful! It is the voice of him I bare when all the birds were singing in the branches! It is the cry of him who called me 'mother' when only seven moons had shone upon his nights! And is he not a man child? Oh gods! Oh fiends! His eyes are like the light of day! His lips are like new honey! His limbs are laved with costly oils at sunrise! His lids are stained with ointment and the first roses of the rose crowned year breathe through the silken shadows of his hair!

Oh fiends! Oh gods! Give back the child I bare to me again! 'Tis mine! 'tis mine to pillow him these heavy nights! 'Tis mine to guard the sweetness of his sleep! Gods! did I weary when I watched with him? Fiends! did I ever let him thirst? Oh Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram! Let me look into his eyes again and I will perish silently! Let me hold him on my heart once more and I will cease from striving! Ram, hear my oath— — —" Again the long arms closed about

Oh Sunlit-browed! I hunger for my child!" she cried; "I hunger unto death!" she moaned.

Gently the other led her to the carriage and made her sit within, saying "Wait here in safety till I come again to you."

Then the foreign woman turned and fled across the way and ran along the bending of the wall unto the heavy gate where sat the guard who knew her and opened up the lesser way to let her pass.

And when her feet had spurned the way between and she was come into the presence of the oldest woman of the house, grandmother of the children, she besought the least child to be sent with her to sit in her wine coloured coach and see the shining of the torches in the night and all the colors of the turbans in the highway and the gay processions with dancing girls going, as is their custom, after, stepping to the beat of drums and cymbals.

And when she knew the boy was eager till his baby eyes grew large with longing tears, the aged woman let him go: wrapped in a cloth of goat's hair finer than fine spun silk.

Bearing the child upon her leaping heart, Scotch Marian passed the gate and laid him in his mother's arms.

And when they came among the multitude the child was pleased and babbled of the colours and the lights, while she who clasped him thrilled to all the restless touches of his baby limbs.

And while they moved so forward among the winding city ways ‘‘Know this, I pray you, oh my little Sister’’ said the foreign woman ‘‘what thou hast this hour is not by voiceless gods or unrelenting fiends, but by a God who lives and loves: Him call we Father and He gives good gifts to those who ask.’’

And when the time was passed, they came again unto the heavy shadow of the high stone wall; and there the mother laid her child into those arms which had so ministered to her, in silence.

Then she sank down on the stones and lay, wrapped in her cloth.

But when the child was left beside his granddame’s knee and she returned, upon whose lifted brow the crown of love’s high service shone, new burnished by the deed her hands had wrought, the woman had departed from the stones and search was fruitless.

Servants were sent to watch, but no one ever saw the Hindu widow by the wall again.

## 2.

There is one city in India which is not changed because of the English. Except in a building where only women live, no stranger dwells within its gates. That place is a mission and is not like other missions. It is called Asalaam Ghur. The women walk softly and wear white garments and sober faces, as women who have no husbands should.

The mission truly began when Martha and Marian were little girls, at a small place called Oxford in England, on a day when they stood close together on the avenue which leads straight away from the front of one of the main buildings of the University. They were near the spot where the martyrs were burned.

A returned missionary had been entertained in Martha's home and the child had kept quietly near him and listened to what he said with almost breathless interest.

And every night, when she was sent to bed up in her little white room, she lay much longer than was her custom staring with wide brown eyes at the wavering shadows on the ceiling: till they stretched out into Jungle paths and spread open into missionary tents and sheltered little hurrying skurrying companies of very black boys and girls. These followed her into her dreams and chased her down dark alleys and frightened her till she woke and felt ashamed and wondered what God did to missionaries to make them brave enough and if He would be able to make her brave enough.

It was not easy for Martha to tell out what was in her heart; but little Scotch Marian was her dear friend and always gentle and sympathetic.

So while they stood in the sunshine, Martha said "Marian, I am going to be a missionary myself, when I am grown up."

There was a silence while Marian's big eyes widened and her lips gathered a piteous look "Oh Martha! Don't you suppose I could go too?"

"I don't know, maybe" said grave Martha.

“Don’t you suppose,” pleaded Marian “if we both of us prayed to God every day of our lives, that He could make it, somehow, so we could?”

“I should suppose so, if He wished to” said Martha.

“Will you pray too if I will?” and Marian’s tone had grown wistful.

Now Martha had a great awe of God and Marian’s eagerness to apply to Him startled her.

She mused a moment on whether it would be proper; and then said slowly “I want to think about it some more, Marian.”

And the children walked in silence and soberly till they came to Martha’s gate, where Marian quickly reached and flung both arms around Martha’s neck “Oh PLEASE! I’m SURE God would!” and then let go as suddenly and ran onward, with her broad brow bent a little forward.

That night she slept after her tears were all wept away. She had no fear concerning God: but she was afraid of Martha’s decision.



A week later Martha said abruptly ‘‘I will pray to God with you, Marian; but we must never forget or He might be angry.’’

A great crystal light leaped into Marian’s eyes and her sensitive face flushed pink with gladness.

They arranged to pray every morning, each when she first woke up. This they did faithfully as the years slipped by; even after changes came and carried them apart— —faithfully, every morning, each when she first woke up.

When Martha’s father died, she went to London and took a special course in medicine; and they gave her the responsibility without the honour of an M. D.

There she found Ida, who was a rare woman, with the golden head and wondrous fair smooth face of little childhood: with the poise and strength of those who are called seers: with some never spoken and unanswerable question in her innocent eyes: with that spirit which serves through impossibilities because it does not stand aside to count the odds. A woman who could not understand the nature of men; and so remote from them that they had never seen her beauty when it passed.



So when Martha asked her to go to India, she held out her little firm white hand frankly and gave in it the gift of a priceless life to a measureless ministry.

While they were preparing to leave England the Church was securing for them an empty building within the walls of an ancient city in India, where lived one hundred and fifty thousand souls without a single Christian teacher of any sort.

Also, the house was very old and cheap.

Marian stood on the pier at Liverpool and watched the ship as long as she could see Martha and Ida waving their handkerchiefs. Then she went back and cared very gently for her frail old mother till she died.

Martha and Ida entered quietly into the house which had been secured for them in India by the beneficence of the missionary society.

Several generations before a gentleman and his servants and perhaps a hundred women belonging to him had lived in it. Then it was called a Palace; and the name had remained to it through the devastations worked by many seasons. His own rooms had been large and open to the air and light: also, his courtyard was long and paved with fine stone about the well for bathing. But the rooms of the women were all small and dark, without windows of any kind or opening for

air beside a narrow door in each. The woodwork had rotted with damp between the folds upon folds of thick stone walls. The floors of beaten earth were soft with mold; and the walls lodged scorpions in every crack and centipedes under every ledge where brackets had been built to hold drinking vessels and pots of ointment and images of household gods. An old mud figure of Genash still curled the trunk of his elephant head in a corner and behind it, in the same nook, a small piece of uncut turquoise gathered mold.

Martha and Ida called in men to make cement floors and masons and carpenters to open out the walls of the little rooms into the courtyards back of them and put windows where they tore away stones and to make better doors and to renew the well.

While these things were being done they remained within, giving instructions to the workmen through an interpreter, from morning till night every day.

One morning in the midst five native gentlemen clothed in immaculate white linen entered the open outer door and stood before them. Their faces were like fine bronze and they wore fixed countenances without any expression.

One spoke to Martha in English, using careful pronunciation ‘‘We have heard concerning you, Ladies of the English

nation, that you are teachers to snow the religion of Christians to us; and we are come to speak to our people of this city that we have no requirement for that religion. We would not be without courtesy to you, but we would ask you to remove to some place outside. Your people are not living in this city. We cannot give you Salaam to this place. We are grieved. We cannot say to you a welcome to live here. It is impossible for you to remain. We hope you will go soon."

Then Martha answered him with soberness that the place was leased by others for them for fifty years and they would be obliged to stay.

A still more perfect fixedness locked all the lines of those bronze faces fast; only, the man who spoke let his eyelids drop till his eyes looked long while he said, in a very even tone, "Yes? Then I will tell you a thing. Under this place where you stand, far in the ground, as far as this highest roof is high, in the old days, before your nation was a people, when they wore skins for a covering only and ate uncooked meat for food as other beasts, in this place, below where you stand, in the midst of a proud city which had perfect justice, was a dungeon.

The walls remain; but the cells are empty. It may be found that in one are the bone parts of a foreigner. The doors are closed, but there is yet a way. Also, there is room for more bones."

Martha hesitated because of her amazement.

“Oh Sirs!” rang the clear, confident tones of Ida’s child-like voice, “You do not understand: we have not come just to teach your people a new religion, but we have come to do them good; especially to the ill. Of course you do not know about it, but we are able to take care of those who are diseased and make them well. Won’t you send some such people to us and let us try? And then, if we do them good, you will let us stay and live in your city; but if we do not do them good, we will go and die in the dungeon.”

While she spoke the great eyes of the men had widened more and more upon her golden head and smooth white brow and little, reaching, flower-like hands; and now they blazed and shone with great astonishment because of her strange beauty and unfearing earnestness.

One moment they stood so and breathed deeply. Then the man who spoke for them said only “We will send.”

And they lifted their hands, with a movement as if they were unconscious of it, to their heads and went away.

Martha looked after them a moment; and then she turned and laid her hands upon the golden head and her lips against the smooth white brow. And they both went back and continued making preparations.

And after a few days the city opened her hand and rendered up to them her blighted and blind and crippled and sore and pestilence smitten and disease eaten and fortune cursed. And they reached and took that she gave and bent themselves to the never ending routine of a divine servitude.

After Marian's mother died the Missionary Society sent her to fill a vacancy in Bombay. She had written asking to be sent to Martha; but the Missionary Society had not heard the prayers that had been prayed to God and if He sent any message to the office concerning the matter, it miscarried into the pigeon hole with Marian's timid request and afterward got filed away with other papers referring to the disposal of lives.

The Missionary Society had forgotten what it was made for; and the knowledge that it was originated and intended solely as a means to facilitate the usefulness of lives devoted to difficult services had already been crumpled up in the moving of its wheels even as the ribs of men were once crumpled beneath the older and more clumsy Juggernaut.

The Missionary Society had plans of its own and it needed Marian to serve them. So she slaved in the South alone

through seven seasons of rains and heats till a hungry fever seized her and gnawed her through and through. Then the Missionary Society sent her North and she was laid in a palankin at Martha's feet.

When they knew that she would live, a transfer was easily secured and a room on one of the roofs was built for her.

And when she entered into it for the first time to sleep, Martha stood with her in the doorway; and they looked into each other's eyes.

And Marian said softly "Sister, I have prayed almost every day of my life since our first covenant, twenty-three years ago, to be here with you, as I am tonight."

And Martha lifted her steady brown eyes and looked over the roofs of the city till she saw a glimmer on the Golden Temple dome under the moon; and then she looked back until she saw white hairs on the red gold of Marian's head; and then she spoke heavily "I DESIRE faith!"

### 3.

A rude bullock cart laden with corn which must be exchanged for wheat and dhol groaned heavily through the dust of the highway toward the city.

The beasts carried their heads very low and hung red tongues out between dry drawn lips. Their eyes were unafraid but full of pain, which they bore patiently, after the excellent manner of their kind.

The man who sat on a pole between them lifted a tail occasionally in his hand, by force of habit, but only flapped; he did not twist, because they were his own. They had come to him in the early spring from a petty prince to whom he gave his young daughter because she was beautiful and suitable to serve as waiting woman in a noble house. The other women there had been told that her price was very great; but the man who was her father knew that these white creatures and a milk buffalo and three goats was all; and it should have been more by at least a cow.



On one side of the road a lime hedge reached along to the horizon; its little dark leaves hung heavy and grey with dust, for it was late in June.

On the other side, not far away, an old neem tree, distorted by some monsoon storm, leaned for refreshment toward a well.

The oxen lunged a little forward when they heard the creaking wheel and swayed their heads from side to side till the cart rocked.

“What! Nameless Ones! and Without Reason!” shouted the man “Do you complain now, before, or wait till afterward! Go! and with care! Ai! What! Make a use of caution!” And when they reached the well, he loosed them and led them down one side, which had been built with gradual descent for such a use.

And when they stood flank deep, he lifted water in his small brass lota and bathed them.

Afterward he drank; and while he drank a woman’s voice moaned deeply by the well; and he went up and found her at the neem tree’s root.

“By what cause lie you at noontide without strength?” said he.



“By that destiny” she answered him “which calls death near this side the city where my journey tends. These many days have I made pilgrimage, Oh Father of Strong Sons. From the queen city of the land, among her palms, beside the sea. Past the great Ghatts in monsoon time. Beside the shelving rice-fields south of Vindhya’s changeless streams. Along the withered distances of Rajputana when the grains were reaped. I have kissed the holy rivers with my brow against their currents all the way. I have eaten of earth for food and had my tears to drink in desolation. I have gathered wounds of hoofs and wounds of hands in bitterness. And now falls fever and the carrion eating birds are in the air.”

She was a widow and old. She had no grace or beauty left in her. She was not good to see or touch.

While he looked on her, the man wondered if the girl he had sold in the spring for two white bullocks and a milch buffalo and three goats could ever change by any destiny to look like this.

But her price had not been sufficient by at least a cow.

So he said “Sit in the cart and I will put you by the city’s gate at night.”

The woman lifted her head and measured the horizon with her glassy eye “Lo, I have found compassion in a man! After many days, oh ye Gods! Ye Gods! after many days!”

And then she swayed and breathed a deep breath and gained her feet. And when she stood before him, he saw only a little, slender form, not larger than the girl he had sold in the Spring.

She sat on the cart in the midst of the bags of grain; and the fever weighed on her and she leaned and slept.

And at sunset they came to the gate of the city and he drove through the gate and set her on the ground and she crawled to the wall and lay where the blind folk sit by day to beg.

In the morning they found her there with their hands and roused her. And when she had spoken to them out of her great weakness, a woman covered her with cotton cloth; and at that time a wide cart going outward through the city gate passed near.

And the widow asked of those blind who were beside her where she lay, "Know you whose cart is full of little children?"

And one answered "That is the cart from the Asalaam Ghur and these be cripples every one. Of the foreign women, one is strong and great and one is low and beautiful and both have skill to heal the wounded: and wisdom and learning and knowledge concerning many things. But the one who goes in the wide cart with crippled children through the

gates at dawn, taking them to breathe seven breaths of sweet air from the English gardens miles away, she is not many moons come from Bombay. They say her hair is like the heart of carbuncles and full of golden light also."

And the woman ceased speaking to cry again toward the footsteps of a passer by.

Three pice fell in her lap. And when she had blessed the giver she laid a pice between the palm bones of the widow's hands, saying "The beginning of this day is auspicious to us and we will acknowledge the fortune of your coming."

And the widow asked "The woman with the glory in her hair, is she of great stature?"

Another answered "Yes; as tall as a Hill woman; for her breath came above my head when she entered into that room where the low one puts charmed water into little Isha's eyes. She came and stood near; and she is high. I know."

"And is she from Bombay?"

"Bombay or Lucknow or Moultan, WHAT is it?" shouted a man from down the wall toward the gate.

"Nay! be generous to my questioning, oh Brother! for that I also am come from Bombay, which is the city of my youth, before the hand of Death laid curses on my life and gathered forth destruction from the bowels of the Ages that I should eat and perish slowly" said the widow.

“From Bombay surely: was it not spoken in the market when she came, my Sisters? Also, she had a fever” called another woman.

A leper’s muffled cry came from the wall beyond the gate.

And then the widow said “I desire to stand before her face before I die.”

“Some of us will go at sunrise to the Asalaam Ghur for the healing of their herbs upon our eyes. You may walk also and enter in with us” said she whose cotton cloth lay on the widow.

And when the blind rose up at sunrise, she went with them. But on the way she fell and none could rouse her; and they lifted and carried her in their hands and laid her in the doorway of the wall which is before the Asalaam Ghur and left her there.

Entering by another way, they came into the place where Ida at that hour stood serving those with eyesores and told her how that one a widow, come from the south country a long pilgrimage, with grievous fever fallen in the doorway, desired to die before her countenance whose hair was red and gold and full of glory.

And Ida sent a message to the roof to Marian who came and found the widow lying in that outer door which stands unbarred by day the long year through to furnish way toward succor to the staggering feet of any smitten.

Marian could not know if child or woman lay before her feet, with piteous, wide, unseeing eyes aglaze with fever and thin dry lips drawn fiercely back upon her teeth by pain and small, lean fingers clutching a torn covering on her striving breast.

She lifted it and held the body in her arms and all the limp limbs dangled down her long strong length. And she went with it to the place where Martha was.

And there they bathed the widow and anointed her with oil for nourishment and restored her body from the hush which falls before the face of Death and gathered back her soul from fear into the palpitating strife of sudden hope and laid her softly in white linen while she slept.

And when the second dawn made all the city young in her old age with rose and amethyst and golden splendor on her walls and towers and minarets and domes, so that only glory met the eyes of waking men, the widow's pulses stirred in her thin veins and she awoke and found that she yet lived.

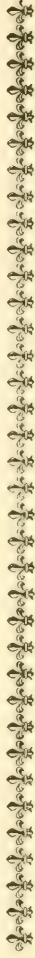
The noiseless hands of Indian maidens served her need and Marian came and leaned above her.

“Him—call—we—Father”—said the widow’s lips.

And Marian stood erect and reached to grasp the marvel with her soul that after many years and at the further end of India this was she—indeed was she because it could not be another—who stood at night outside the high stone wall of an old Hindu house and stretched her naked, empty arms up toward the chamber where her children slept.

And Marian touched the famished breast with her strong hand and searched among the shadows of the gleaming eyes to find assurance.

“Who—gives—good—gifts”—the widow breathed and slept again.



The days began to go by with the motion of that hour which slips into twilight and the same sense that something has gone, irrevocably, and that something different overhangs, immediately before.

The common noises of life began to fail. The birds flew silently. All human eyes gathered a look which beasts

Panting on their low cots lay long rows of fever wasted forms in the Asalaam Ghur.

The widow's cot was drawn so that it stretched across a doorway opening on one of the courts. A long narrow court with a round space in it paved with fine, white stone, where a nobleman had once been used to receive his bath. Near the disc of pavement a small Persian wheel was built in the wall. It creaked a little creak and the sound of dripping water was good to the ears of those whose throats were aching dry with quenchless thirst.

Maidens who served the sick, walking on bare, brown feet noiselessly to and fro, often sprinkled the floor with water out of earthen jars.

Sometimes Marian came across the court and passed swiftly on some errand; then all those long rows of burning eyes and drawn lips turned her way, in silence. She seemed to them like a very tall, white flower, cool and fair; and the perfume of her presence was like the perfume of the divine Lotus.

Always in passing she stayed a moment near the widow's cot to speak some words of hope or courage. Now some-



thing from the Scriptures which she taught; now something leaping hotter from her heart, to answer the parted lips, the questioning eyes, the small, beseeching hands.

All this teaching was hoarded as great treasure and the widow came to be to Marian as disciples are.

The heat increased until the anguish of all living things quivered upon the earth a mighty pall and in its utmost hour the heavens pierced it with the sword of flame and rain descended with the thunderbolt and living things looked up and ceased to die.

Then the earth leaped and in three days tore off her old raiment and cast it from her and stood garmented in splendor and rich with countless tides of life and flung back her gemmed brow and laughed in the face of heaven, glorious with perfect youth.

And all creatures went out among the young leaves to find their mates and the birds bullded among the new branches and the pulses of life ran dim and sweet and strong along the ways of being and the look of fear went out of the eyes of men.

Even the sick, stretched on their low cots, turned eager faces full of new light impatiently toward all the windows



and the doorways; and hands that had lain listless long began to wander restlessly, unsatisfied. And health eked and filtered slowly into their wan veins till many rose and went back to the old life. These, pausing at the gateway, blessed the house—sometimes with silent lips. In the names of many different shining gods they blessed the house, but blessing it they departed.

The widow's limbs were growing round and her hair had become soft and brilliant. Her face was gathering back youth out of the broken past. But her eyes were always famished, questioning, searching, since she had laid hold on life again; and now a piteous, troubled look was gathering about her lips.

Marian inquired of her and she made answer "Ah, my Teacher! Thou hast taught me that if two or three combine together and are in harmony concerning their petition, it shall be granted by Him whom thou namest Father."

"It is written so—and we must believe it—but, of course, He would not give an evil thing" said Marian.

"Ah my heart—my heart!" cried the widow and her voice choked in her throat and she smote her breast with fierce hands "Is it an evil thing that the beauty of life is more cruel than death because in me is the cry for my children? My

children which I bare? My children? My fair sons? Is it an evil thing that I desire to look upon their faces while I live?"

"Oh no! that cannot be evil!" said Marian sadly.

"But I am ONLY ONE!" The wail broke forth from trembling lips, a hopeless, bitter cry.

Marian turned and slowly walked away. With her head bent, she climbed many stairways till she reached Martha near the roof.

That night they knelt together beside the widow's cot and Marian explained.

"Ah— —Ah!" the dark, convulsed throat sobbed.

Every night, until her prayer be answered, they were to come and kneel beside her where she slept and she should speak for her own heart and they would own her prayer and unite their faith with her's in singleness of purpose, silently.

So they covenanted and bowed their heads and the widow lifted her wide eyes full of a measureless, exulting gladness and gazing upward said,

"Oh, Him whom they call Father! give back my children to my hands again—Isu Masih—for his sake—that is all."

The pageant of young life passed through the land; across the fields and by the river, through the singing streams and swaying trees— —a countless multitude of beast and insect and fish and bird, minute and great, all eager, jostling, hungry.

Earth wore her dainty dress for the Passing, then quickly put on sterner covering and spread out denser foliage to shelter them and furnished permanent retreats, warm and odorous of roots and spice woods and delicate hidden blooms.

Faint clouds of perfume out of many blossoms rose with the dawns and floated through the days and the nights settled heavy and languorous. The tides of life had flowed into being and every sense was surfeit of the fulfilment richness. The eyes of men which had been keen with anticipation, were grown lower lidded with content and had not yet looked up to see the form of fear toward the sun.

Every evening Martha and Marian knelt beside the widow where she slept and always she looked straight up and said,

“Oh, Him whom they call Father! give back my children to my hands again—Isu Masih—for His sake—that is all.”

Always they left her silently and moved away toward different duties, avoiding each other's eyes. Sometimes Martha's brow drew together darkly and her lips pressed close and a pallor swept her face. Sometimes Marian's eyes shed forth the white light from the hidden altar, like the flashing of fine swords. Always the widow lay and dreamed a glad, sweet dream

of big, dark, childish eyes and long, perfumed, clinging curls of fine, dark hair and round childish arms, soft skinned as satin—pink and ivory. Dreaming this same dream always she drifted into sleep.

The heat deepened. The air began to palpitate upon the earth and quiver away in a shimmering haze toward the horizon.

Cholera crept up out of a stagnant pool and trailed its slimy length abroad. The people in the villages fled in confusion. Marian followed in its path and found young things, deserted; babes, orphaned, lying naked; small children, famished and too tired to clamour any more to the wide silence for nourishment. These she brought to shelter in the little rooms where dark, caged women long ago gave to the strangler's hands their new born, being helpless. Some days she found no living thing along the roadside; only, perhaps, something that once had lived lying near a tree root.

A flock of little children trudging along the highway toward the city, some sobbing, she overtook one evening. These, they told her, had been used to tending goats, beside the river, among the rocks, these many days. But now, just now, one hour since, returning to their village, they had found all houses empty— all shops abandoned— men, all men, had gone. Whither? Who could know! Search was useless. Doubtless they had learned the cholera's pathway to avoid it. There-

fore it must be coming toward the village. And the children cried aloud and mourned more bitterly, remembering their desolation.

Marian asked if they had other kindred within the city's wall: hoping to comfort them.

“Nay” said a boy in answer “We have no one. But look you, I have read in one small book—for I have been instructed how to read—I have read in one small book that christian's god is father to widow and orphans. We are the orphans and my uncle he has gone. I think we will find the god in christian's house; or else his altar.”

“That is my home” said Marian “and we have His altar there.”

The boy fixed an earnest gaze upon her face: then he said,

“You speak comfortable words, for our legs are very broken and the small hearts are turning faint in them. They are indeed young.”

She led them through the central court of the Asalaam Ghur and gave them into the hands of white-robed maidens, to be bathed and nourished. These also anointed their bruised feet and perfumed the silken masses of their curls with spicy oil.

Being refreshed and fed they were laid to rest in a deep, quiet room beside the chapel.

“This must be his Own house!” murmured drowsy lips and they slept.

All through the evensong Marian saw only the widow, who sat among the other women in the chapel; and when the long procession filed away, she reached and drew her to one side, where Martha stood.

They were tall and white before her and she raised soft, patient eyes to them and waited, meekly. Quick waves of white fire flowed across Marian’s face. She spoke very gently “What were your children’s names—Ananda?”

“Luchman—and——Krishna!” and that instant the dark throat swelled, the breast rose in a resistless passion of silent sobs and the lithe form was upon Marian, clinging like a panther to its prey.

“Take me!” the quivering lips whispered “Take me! Ah!”

They led her. They carried her into the room. She looked. She glided from their hands. She gathered two boys together against her breast. They awakened under her raining tears and they were mute before the glory in her face. The eldest knew her. The youngest was taught that she was his own mother—the widow. They lay in her arms amazed, but full of sleep.



Nestling his cheek against her breast Krishna asked,

“Are they ALL here?”

“Who? Thou bright one!”

“All the other orphans” but he did not wait to hear an answer: he slept.

Martha and Marian left them and climbed hand in hand to the roof. There they stood long in silence together. The city lay at their feet. They looked on its shelving roofs—down into its narrow, aimless streets. The hum of its life rose to their ears. The pulse of its being thrilled against theirs—not mingling—being different—strange, weird, but potent. The conches sounded from the temples here and there. The rhythmic rise and fall of nautch girls’ singing floated past.

They saw and heard, but heeded not the city.

They were enfolded in the glory of a great flame which lapped among the roots of thought and lighted the secret crevices of consciousness.

They had ministered in the Sacrament of faith and their eyes had looked on a divine mystery.

“It was not My faith” said Marian.

“It was not mine” said Martha.





The following of the Spiritual light with the blameless faithfulness of the outward life---that is that to be attained by which we shall arrive at enlightenment.









## THE KING'S LANDS.

In the King's Garden toward the west,  
Where all green things bloom and soft unfolding wait

Near His gate,

In a shadow, overgrown — — faint, were some creepers:  
In a shadow, overgrown — — a bloom.

Some strong growth,  
In sloth,

Leaning heavy, bore them down:

“Make free!”

The King to me,

“Loosen thou my Flowers!”

**In the King's Dry Lands toward the South,  
Where the sullen streams are sucked up by the breath**

**Of gaunt Death,**

**And where any herb is found——there, Desolation:  
And where any child of man——Despair.**



**In this place**

**A space:**

**And the King said "Carry there**

**And give**

**Until they live,**

**Water from my Fountains."**

In the King's High Lands toward the North,  
Men and camels, groping, laboured through the Night,

While the light

Waited far beyond the Hills——far in the distance:  
Waited far beyond the Hills——and long.

Near that way  
One ray

Gave the King into my hand:

“Hold here

This torch, to cheer

Wayfarers till Day dawn.”

**In the King's Fair Lands toward the East,  
Rang a cry so wild and glad its pulsing thrills**

**Shook the Hills;**

**Men and creatures rose to greet——Light, in its shining:**

**Men and creatures rose to meet——in Him,**

**Strong new light!**

**And sight**

**Showed the Land was very full**

**And fair:**

**And heavy, rare**

**Fruit filled all the King's Lands.**



## Footnote.

The word "gods" as used in this book is a poor translation of the word **DEVĀ** — — which signifies, not **GOD**, in the western understanding of that word, but, literally, **A BEING OF A DIFFERENT ORDER THAN HUMAN** — either "bright — shining" — — to distinguish the **devas** who are faithful in their allegiance to the Absolute, the One, the Only, the Self-existent — — or, without prefix, simply **deva** — meaning a dark **deva**, one of the apostate forces.

This word **DEVĀ** would be much better understood by the western mind if it were translated **ANGEL**, since the western mind recognizes that there are beings of other orders than human — as the cherubim, the seraphim, the arch-angels and the angels — and since it recognizes that there are angels of light and angels of darkness also.









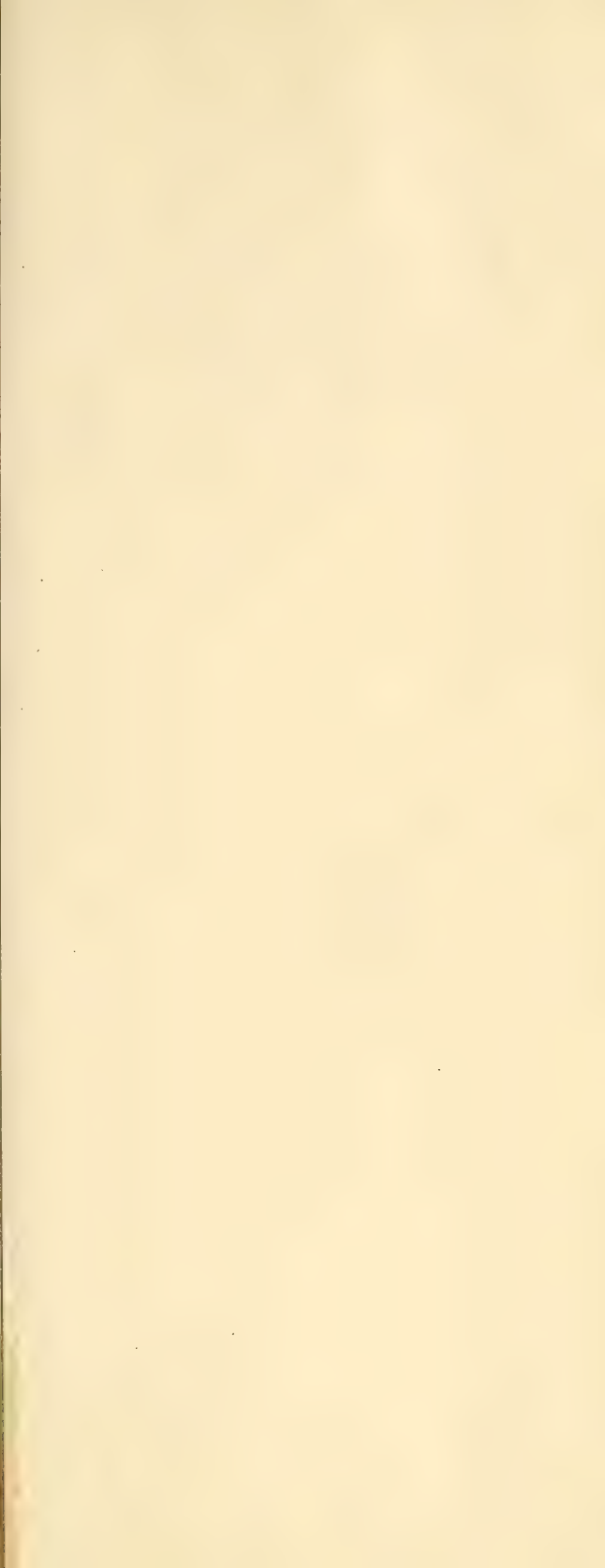




# INCENSE OF SANDALWOOD

By **Willimina L. Armstrong**



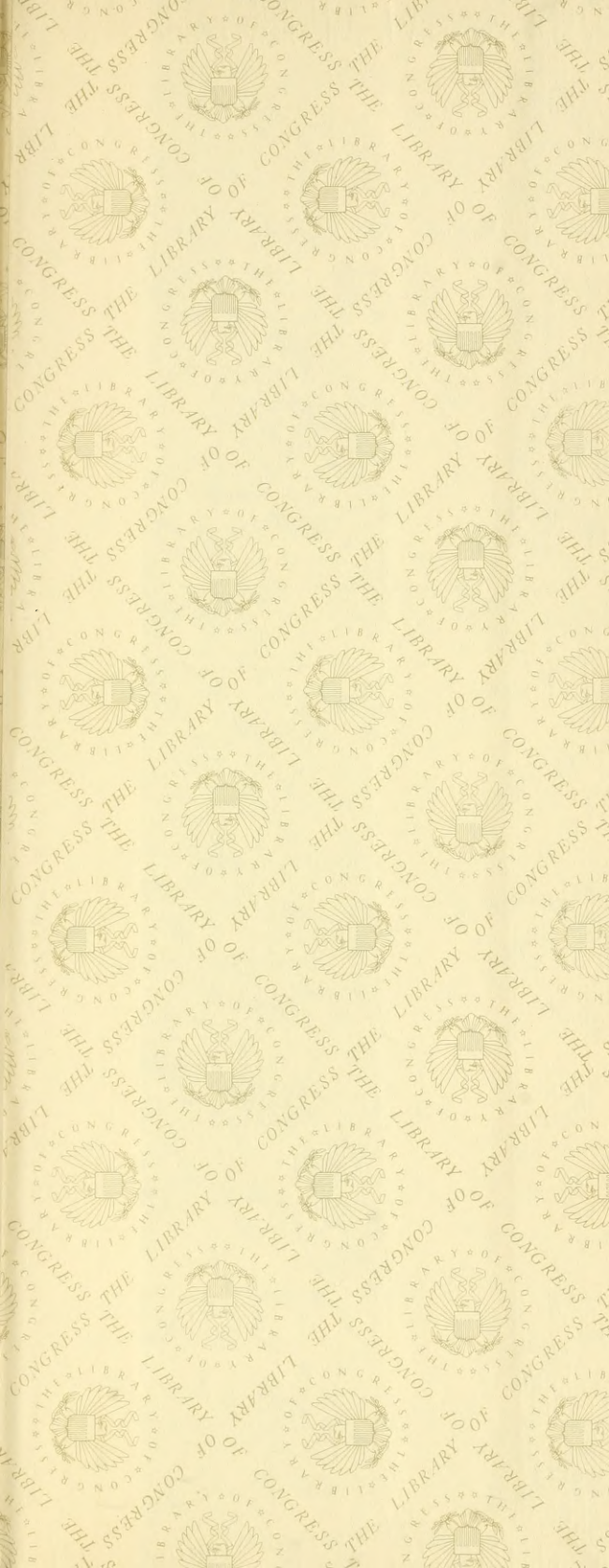






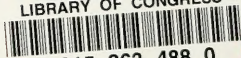








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